Development of the CINDI M&E System

- **Climate in which the M&E system is being developed**
- **The challenge of developing a congruent M&E system**
- **Progress made and learnings so far**
- **The challenges and opportunities**
- **Moving forward to scaling up**

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Climate in which the M&E system is being developed

- Both NGOs and the public sector are currently caught up in the drive to ensure that M&E systems are in place to ensure accountable, focussed use of resources.

- M&E systems are not being developed in a vacuum but as an extension of the neo liberal economic policies that currently prevail globally.

- Within this paradigm, development's main challenges are being presented as service delivery, building of infrastructure etc

- Whereas a human centred paradigm of development focuses more on shifting power relations and seeking change in people

- All of us are confronted by the emerging tensions and need to ask how can we reconcile the two approaches and who should decide the scope of the project planning, monitoring and evaluation agenda?

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The challenge of developing a congruent M&E system

- Diversity of organisations at capacity and sector level. Many are resourced and capacity constrained.
- The issue of vulnerable children presents many challenges – the there is a tendency to respond to short term needs at the expense of supporting longer term sustainable community driven responses
- Funders essentially still set the agenda based on their understanding of the issues very often at the cost of human centred development
- The nature of the work of the organisations presents major M&E challenges – must not fall into the trap of only measuring what can be measured
- Calls for linkages and alignment of HIV and AIDS in terms of "*Triple 1*" are very difficult to implement
- There are serious logistical problems in working in rural areas especially with field workers with low levels of literacy

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Progress made and learnings so far:

- Learning sessions deriving from the results oriented approach were conducted with participating members.
- A handbook was compiled in collaboration with members outlining the basics of the CINDI M&E system. A small booklet was produced as a basis for further learning workshops at organisation level
- We have the basics of a system in place which makes provision for an M&E matrix and reporting systems which are understood by the members who under went training.
- There is commitment to on going learning and broadening participant's competencies in terms of tools,

  planning critical learning events etc.
- There is a commitment to empowering community structures with the capacity to engage fully with planning, monitoring and evaluating projects affecting themselves.

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The challenges and opportunities

- How do we move from the rhetoric of "consultation" with community partners to the reality?

- How do we effect the learning that is needed to move away from crisis management to more sustainable community based longer term responses?

- How do we respond to the "double speak" of tokenistic talk of "rights based approaches" which assumes project participants are citizens with rights with the New Public Management corporatisation of the public sector where project participants are clients and customers.

- How do we reconcile the more narrowly defined project goals with the larger scale systems that drive people's lives within the communities?

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Moving forward to scaling up

- "Scaling up" is a critical issue for a more effective response to the challenges of vulnerable children in a world of HIV and AIDS

- From a planning, M&E perspective continuing external setting of agendas without engagement and consultation with local communities will take us nowhere.

- The highly technocratic approaches to project formulation, planning M&E cannot address the deeply embedded systemic challenges to responding to children in need because they sideline the very people who should be providing leadership.

- The challenge is for us to be constantly be creative and innovative and devise tools and participatory methodologies that work and have meaning and relevance for the communities we serve.

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